

Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission

2008 State Legislative Agenda

1. **Preserve Existing Transportation Funding Formulas.** Retain and enhance California's funding formulas based on the increased costs to maintain and address deficiencies to the existing transportation system. Specifically:
 - a) Support the current SB 45 state formulas and the regional decision-making process for distribution of existing and new transportation funds.
 - b) Support measures that preserve existing transportation funds for transportation uses.
 - c) Support the continuation of recent transportation funding programs dedicated to specific categories of projects such as transit, Safe Routes to Schools, paratransit and Freeway Service Patrol.
 - d) Oppose shifting transportation funds to non-transportation purposes, including loans from transportation accounts and Proposition 42 revenues or the diversion of Public Transportation Account (PTA) funds, including "spillover" revenues, to the State General Fund. (*Focus area for 2008*)
 - e) Support funding for projects that have already been approved as opposed to allocating funding to new projects.
 - f) Ensure that transportation planning funds are available to agencies throughout the year and are not withheld due to delays in enacting the state budget.

2. **Support New Transportation Funding.** Support countywide and statewide efforts to raise needed funds for transportation improvements, including:
 - a) Work with local elected officials, local agencies and interest groups to address continuing gaps in funding for local transportation projects and pursue new local funding sources.
 - b) Support the development of a steady stream of new transportation funds dedicated to local road rehabilitation and maintenance, especially for roadways utilized by bicyclists.
 - c) Support indexing the state gas and fuel tax so that transportation revenues do not lose value due to inflation.
 - d) Support legislative efforts to increase the gas tax and other sources of transportation revenues, and dedicate revenues to transportation projects and programs.
 - e) Support lowering the voter threshold for local transportation funding measures.
 - f) Support legislative efforts to expand the authority of the RTC and local jurisdictions to increase taxes and fees for transportation projects, including taxes fees, vehicle registration fees, congestion pricing, and fees relating to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. (*Focus area for 2008*)
 - g) Support efforts that expand revenue-raising opportunities and innovative financing options beyond the traditional gas tax. (*Focus area for 2008*)

3. **Infrastructure Bond Implementation**
 - a) **Monitor Follow-up Legislation to the Proposition 1B Transportation Bond Measure.** Where implementing language is still required, advocate and support development of equitable program guidelines and project criteria to ensure a fair allocation of funds from the transportation bond measure passed in the 2006 General Election Ballot. Ensure that such legislation maximizes funds for the Santa Cruz County region and retains the region's authority to decide how to program any new funds. Work with the Governor's Administration, the Legislature, the California Transportation Commission, Caltrans, and others in key decision-making processes.

- b) **Support early allocation** of Proposition 1B funds for transit and local street/roads programs. (*Focus area for 2008*)
 - c) **Proposition 1B State-Local Partnership Program:** Support inclusion of local road rehabilitation projects and projects under \$25 million as eligible projects; support inclusion of all voter-approved funds, not just local “transportation” sales taxes, as eligible matching funds; and support a broad definition of eligible agencies for the State-Local Partnership Program that does not disadvantage agencies without a local sales tax specified for transportation. (*Focus area for 2008*)
 - d) **Proposition 1C:** Support local applications for Proposition 1C housing programs, including the Infill Incentive and Transit Oriented Development grants.
4. **Maximize Local Area Funding.** Work to assure that state transportation programs provide the maximum amount of revenues for the Santa Cruz County region. If special state funding programs are developed, support funding of projects in Santa Cruz County, especially those in the Watsonville to Santa Cruz corridor, with congestion relief on Highway 1, as the first priority.
5. **Support Efforts that Can Expedite Project Delivery.**
- a) Support greater flexibility in contracting methods and authorization of public/private partnerships. Support the authority to use design-build construction methods for the Highway 1 HOV Lane Project. Support legislative efforts to enable Caltrans to take further advantage of design sequencing to accelerate project completion.
 - b) Support initiatives that increase the ability to trade federal funds for state funds as a way to expedite project delivery, as currently exists for Santa Cruz County’s share of Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP) funds.
6. **Support Government Restructuring to Improve Efficiency.** Support organizational reform efforts that would improve transportation funding, programming or project delivery.
7. **Air Quality/Climate Change** (*Focus area for 2008*)
- a) Coordinate with legislators, local government and other key stakeholders to incorporate the region’s needs in emerging climate change and sustainability programs, legislation, and regulations.
 - b) Monitor and seek to influence implementation of AB 32 – the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, especially those measures impacting transportation and land use.
 - c) Oppose efforts that make regional blueprints a conditioned or required factor in the allocation of funds.
 - d) Support efforts to reduce the number of vehicle miles traveled and encourage smart-growth practices which also preserve the authority and flexibility of local agencies.
 - e) Ensure that planning requirements for global climate change provide the necessary tools to ensure that local-option transportation measures can adequately address greenhouse gases without unduly impeding the ability to place such measures before the voters or to deliver the programs approved by the voters.
 - f) Support legislation that advances research and development of alternate fuels and other technologies and the retrofit and conversion of existing heavy-duty vehicles to clean technologies that meet air quality standards.

- g) Support efforts at inter-agency collaboration to prevent piecemeal regulation/implementation.
- h) Support legislation that would authorize pay-as-you-drive (PAYD) auto insurance in which the premium is calculated in part and adjusted on the basis of how much a person drives.

8. Specifics

a) Transit:

- Support funding programs that promote transit-oriented development and transit villages. Ensure that state-supported housing projects near transit facilities provide safe and convenient access for disabled person from the housing to transit, including the guidelines for Prop 1C programs.
- Support protections of remaining Proposition 116 funds for local projects.
- Support legislation to provide incentives for bicycle, pedestrian, carpool, vanpool and transit use, for both employers and employees, similar to those incentives provided in federal law.
- Support measures to allow the use of gas taxes for transit capital purposes, including purchases of rolling stock.
- Seek to increase the current funding levels for elderly and disabled transportation, including funds to meet increasing service requirements for ADA paratransit.
- Support Medicaid funding for transit and oppose reductions in Medi-Cal reimbursement rates for transportation.
- Support introduction and passage of legislation designed to enact additional sources of transit operating and capital assistance.
- Support the *Safe, Reliable High-Speed Train Bond Act for the 21st Century*, a ballot initiative to issue a multi-billion bond in order to plan and construct a high-speed rail transportation system that will connect Southern California to the Central Valley, Sacramento and the Bay Area. Support alignments that will maximize benefits for Santa Cruz County travelers.
- Support development of the Coast Daylight train and Transportation Agency for Monterey County's CalTrain extension projects.

b) Bicycling & Walking

- Support legislative initiatives to improve conditions and funding for improvements for cycling and walking at the local level.
- Support increased funding for bicycle projects and programs, including bicycling education and awareness programs, the Bicycle Transportation Account and Safe Routes to Schools program.
- Support measures that would require bicycle and pedestrian facilities as a part of newly constructed roads and streets.
- Support programs beneficial to accessible pedestrian improvements and communities with limited means.
- Support the inclusion of bicycle education programs (e.g. helmet laws, etc.) in public and private schools.
- Seek and support legislation to create a "Share the Road" license plate, with proceeds dedicated to bicycling-related activities.

- Seek and support legislation prohibiting parking in designated bicycle lanes, to allow law enforcement to ticket vehicles parked in bicycle lanes even if specific “no parking” signage is absent.
 - Ensure that Mobility Management Centers are eligible to receive FTA 5310 funds;
 - Support continuation of competitive process, rather than formula distribution, of FTA5310 funds
- c) **Carpooling:**
- Oppose measures to remove existing or restrict future High Occupancy Vehicle lanes.
 - Support measures to establish car sharing/station car programs.
 - Support efforts to secure new funding for regional rideshare programs.
- d) **SAFE Callbox and Freeway Service Patrol**
- Support proposals to increase state funding of Freeway Service Patrol programs.
 - Support development of a statewide callbox network that is well coordinated with the existing Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies (SAFE) callbox programs.
 - Support increased flexibility for compatible expenditures of SAFE funds.
- e) **Safety**
- Support increased funding for California Highway Patrol enforcement.
 - Support legislative initiatives to improve safety for motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians.
- f) **Eminent Domain**
- Monitor eminent domain legislation to ensure that proposals will not adversely affect transportation project timelines, delivery, and costs.
 - Support efforts to remedy project delivery problems resulting from restrictions imposed on the use of eminent domain (SB1210).
9. Coordinate with Local, Regional and State Agencies and Organizations on legislative principles of mutual interest.

SUMMARY OF FOCUS AREAS FOR 2008:

- Oppose shifting transportation funds to non-transportation purposes;
- Expansion of the authority of the RTC and local jurisdictions to increase taxes and fees for transportation projects;
- Expansion of revenue-raising opportunities and innovative financing options beyond the traditional gas tax;
- Early allocation of Proposition 1B funds for transit and local street/roads programs;
- Proposition 1B State-Local Partnership Program; and
- Air quality/climate change

Please contact Rachel Moriconi, Senior Transportation Planner at rmoriconi@sccrtc.org or 831-460-3203 with any questions about the RTC Legislative Agenda.